Bn HQ

G23

16 November 1966

Distr

SUBALTERNS ESSAY COMPETITION 1966

Reference A: GRO 419 dated 11 November 1966.

1. Subjects for this essay are:-

a. Subject 1

In the next few years Britain will almost certainly decide whether to become interdependent and go into Europe or remain independent and stay out. What course she finally follows must shape her future as a military, political and economic power. With this in mind outline the considerations on which such a far-reaching decision should be based, and in determining the course you would wish Britain to follow describe how she will continue to exert influence as a great power.

or

b. Subject 2

Liddell Hart once said, "There is only one thing harder than getting a new idea into the Army's head and that is getting the old one out".

Describe and give your reasons for some of the innovations which you would like to see introduced into the Army in the next decade and the customs, procedures or techniques which you would like to see discontinued.

2. The essay is to be written by all Subaltern addressees.

3. Essays are to be either hand written or typed and are to be between 1000 and 1500 words in length. The authors name rank and Regiment are to be entered at the top right hand corner of the first page.

4. Essays will be submitted to the Bn Second in Command by 16th January 1967 for initial marking.

5. The two best and two worst essays will be submitted to HQ Aden Bde. The author of the best essay in Aden will receive a prize of £SA 5.

(R.P.T. EARLE)
Capt A/Adjt

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Subalterns Essay Competition.

The Army quite obvious by the some things about it which need correcting. This is exemplified by firstly the number of people in the Army who are trying to obtain a ~~purchase~~ his charge by purchase and secondly by the rate of recruiting. I shall not try to attempt to answer all the Army's problems but I wish to point out certain problems which I think are worth noting.

It has been, I know, a bone of contention for a long time but the problem of acting and bad round cannot be dismissed without a ~~thought~~ shoulder. As a junior commander the problem is very apparent and the following example is typical. A soldier who is considered potential

N.C.O. material is decided to be promoted to the rank of lance-corporal. However because of the EEC commitments "the establishment" of his battalion he can only be given an acting or local rank. In the latter case he is not paid for his task. What happens now to this hapless soldier when acting as an N.C.O. in the course of his duties he performs a misdemeanour. As an N.C.O. he cannot be put on restriction of privileges and therefore will be fined. Therefore what in reality is happening is that the chap is being punished for an error done in a job which he is not paid for. This wears that he loses out both ways: not only as an N.C.O. but also as a private rank. In addition when the EEC committment of the battalion is diminished, and in this particular case force comprals return there will be no place

for him in his job and thus he will be at very worthy with that all round.

The system in this particular case has obviously gone quite "bugwise" and what I suggest is that GOC or Brigade Commanders be allowed to create paid ranks as and when a particular station demands it; or the advice of the Commanding Officer of the unit concerned. The present system only causes unrest and again towards the job is hard.

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As we have seen over the last few months the Army is trying to recruit new interviews through the medium of television and the press. It is quite obvious that to do this the Army must compare Army life to a great extent with that of a civilians. To prevent complete disillusionment therefore the Army must try to fulfill

its promise. "A life of action" for a soldier is now ~~completely~~ virtually non-existent with only one theatre of operations still open. (Aden) (here in Aden the men cannot have enough of P.S. operations and rather more use of them being made ~~need~~ as soldiers rather than police men.)

It is therefore my suggestion that to provide more of an incentive, in one particular field, that a payment should be made to soldiers for guards which they have to perform. In comparison to civilian life, the Army's choice not mine, asking bodies asked to work after 5.30 without extra pay would amount to a national strike. Why therefore does the Army not make one of its more odious tasks more of a tribulation than a toil. The 'fee' paid to a soldier for a 12 hour guard need only be in the range of one or two shillings but at least

the soldier would feel that he was doing something a little more worth while. He would also feel that ~~and that at~~ ~~at least~~ whilst his "mechens" were out spending money he was making a bit. (This ~~some~~ could equally ~~also~~ apply to Orderly Officers!)

It is a well known fact that to maintain an efficient body of men as an Army one must have discipline. However in these days of humanitarianism one must be careful not to tip the scales too far in the favour of humanity over good discipline. I have one particular case in mind and that is from personal experience. Before the days of comparison with civilian life 28 days detention was something to be dreaded. Today this is quite definitely not the case. The fact is that a soldier does not

and going into the Guardroom.
There are several reasons for
this. Firstly he is guaranteed
a decent nights sleep whilst, as
is Aden at the moment, sleep ~~[illegible]~~
on guards or F.S. at periods
of now the four hours is
comparative bliss. Secondly
the prisoners can now be "signed
out" to any old F soldier to go
and do any task. The signee
would be the prisoners greatest
"mate" for all the interest that
is taken in the matter. Without
proper supervision the ~~[illegible]~~
prisoner can do anything whilst
out on signature. Thirdly
physical training and drill
appear to have been dropped
from a prisoners curriculum.
Even if it is conducted it is
under the eyes of a none too
watchful Orderly Sergeant in most

cases. Fourthly the apparent adoption of a multiple cell rather than a single one gives the guardroom the feeling of a club for all the old boys of a unit. As soon as this happens the whole reason for detention becomes laughingly ludicrous.

To remedy this situation I feel it would be wise to implement some of the following suggestions. Firstly where a unit has an I.S. commitment the prisoners should be made to perform such tasks which soldiers on duty have to do hence saving valuable time which would be spent resting. For example cleaning washrooms whilst Companies are out on operations. Secondly prisoners should only be signed out only to N.C.O's and during their absence for the Guardroom all work supervised by a member of the

Provost staff. Thirdly physical segregation should be carried out, not as a "thing one does whilst one is under detention" but as a time where the standard of fitness can be generally ~~increased~~ raised. Fourthly, and, obviously more difficult to implement, that each prisoner be given a single cell. This I consider to be the greatest deterrent as any soldier is naturally gregarious.

If these suggestions were carried out I am sure that it would dispell the view that "I shall only get 28 days nick anyway".

Whatever war Britain next gets involved in its infantry are still bound to use their feet. For this reason, if none other, I think it would be wise to consider a new boot for the soldier to fight in.

The DMS boot which we use at the moment is pediatrically sound but has various shortcomings. It is not waterproof and is certainly too cold for use during winter in Central Europe. It takes a comparatively long time to do up and the laces can and do invariably break. The junction between the top of the boot and the bottom of the gaiter or anklet is frustrating to say the least during physical exertion. Not only is this junction not water-resistant but also at times "devilish chilly".

It would appear that because of these ~~shortcomings~~ faults that a calf boot would exactly fit the bill. It should be made to click in the same way as the better type of ski boot. With various positions for the clip to be fastened it would allow plenty of room for extra socks & the wom

The calf part of the boot should cover up to just under the calf muscle of the leg; that is about an

just above where a normal anklet or puttee would reach. This would give real support to the ankle and not an ~~false support~~ imaginary one. What is the cause of so many ankle injuries. The tongue of the boot should be made of soft leather and stitched up to the top of the boot. This would stop moisture getting in and in colder climes prevent ~~ice~~ melting for working around the toes. ✳

Grits that melt a boot would be unhealthy ~~prevent the~~ for breathing ~~and this would be unhealthy~~ would soon prove groundless. The corporative times for taking off a boot, washing and pandering the feet and changing the socks for DMS boot and puttee combination and a ship or boat would be about ~~10:1~~ five to one. For a ship or boat the care of the operation would ever encourage a soldier to make routine checks of his feet: this is not the case with a DMS boot.

It therefore becomes quickly apparent

Moreover with the advent of ~~the use~~ of nuclear weapons on a tactical battlefield contaminated dust is now a constant hazard. A tool such as this would prevent lifting of the dust and would also facilitate its quick removal.

that a "ship-or" cable boat would be beneficial to the infantry as a whole and in fact the continued use of the D.T.S boat thoroughly detrimental!

I have tried to show what I think ~~should be tried~~ are the biggest sources of discontent at the lower levels of the Army at the moment. If during the next decade some of the suggestions can be implemented I am sure it would have a very beneficial effect. Most important of all however is the problem of selling and local rank. Without an indisputable rank system an army cannot hope to stand when it is put to the true test.